

April 8, 2022

President Joe Biden  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I write to express concern and confusion with your administration's recently announced policies relating to immigration and travel across the United States. Over just a few weeks, you and your Departments of Homeland Security (DHS) and Transportation (DOT) have conveyed to the American people incoherent, contradictory, and ultimately destructive priorities about the state of the COVID-19 pandemic, our border security, and safety across our nation's system of air travel.

For months, the American people have made clear their readiness to return to normal, as well as their desire to move beyond your administration's heavy-handed COVID-19 restrictions. In your first State of the Union address, you announced your apparent agreement, saying "[t]onight, I can say we are moving forward safely, back to more normal routines." It was a relief for the vast majority of Americans. Yet weeks later, your Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Transportation Security Administration (TSA) baffled policymakers and travelers with an announcement that the federal mask mandate for planes and other transportation would be extended, once again, to April 18. The administration's move, which elicited vocal disapproval from the air industry and lawsuits from 21 states, has only added to the now-familiar frustrations of simply trying to get around the country. However, while Americans grapple with these now extended frustrations, your White House has worked overtime to make flying easier for those entering or attempting to move throughout the country unlawfully. By implementing an outrageous new policy permitting illegal immigrants to board flights using arrest warrants or other immigration enforcement documents, you are unacceptably putting other travelers and their destinations at a serious security risk. I have written to your administration imploring that you immediately cease this – as well as introduced legislation to put a halt to it – but I have yet to receive a response.

Your extended transportation mask mandate is especially difficult to understand in the context of your announcement to lift Title 42 public health restrictions at the border next month without any replacement. Your administration estimates that the change will cause as many as 18,000 migrants per day to pour across our southern border, many unmasked and unvaccinated. Furthermore, recent reporting suggests that if you proceed as planned, your administration is bracing for a flood of as many as 500,000 migrants to the United States in as little as six weeks' time. If you allow this surge to proceed, you will be inflicting catastrophe on a nation already

reeling from the consequences of your administration's non-enforcement of our immigration laws.

Given the extent of these challenges, the American people might reasonably ask how their taxpayer dollars are being spent, if not to uphold our immigration laws. Last month, your DHS and DOT provided an answer in the form of "new measures to better serve all Americans, regardless of their gender identity" as part of a "whole-of-government effort to promote equity and inclusion." In practice, this woke declaration means relaxing screening procedures designed to protect passengers and, instead, pursuing such priorities as adding an "X" gender option to the TSA's PreCheck system.

Americans are understandably confused by your White House's COVID-19 and border security priorities. In light of your ongoing lobbying for billions in new, pandemic-related spending and your TSA's extension of mask mandates, your administration's message seems to be that the public health threat from COVID-19 has not yet subsided for law-abiding Americans, yet the emergency is effectively over at the border. I implore you and your administration to immediately recalibrate these priorities to be in line with those of the American people, who have made clear their support for securing the border, removing unscientific restrictions on domestic travel, and doing everything we can to get this country back to work.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,



Marco Rubio  
U.S. Senator

Cc:

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas, Secretary, U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
The Honorable Pete Buttigieg, Secretary, U.S. Department of Transportation